

THE DRAMA AS INTERPRETED IN WASHINGTON THEATERS

Trying a Play on the Dog---Is Washington's Pre-Eminence as a First-Night City a Doubtful Distinction?--Long List of Plays Successfully Launched Here---Are the Local Play-Goers Any Gainers Thereby.

When I was young and callow, which was many years ago, I wrote a tragedy that fairly reeked with gore. With every act concluding with the dead piled on the floor. A mighty effort, by the gods! and after I had read the manuscript to Daly, that dramatic censor said: "The plot is most exciting, and I like the dialogue; You should take the thing to Providence, and try it on the dog."

In a meter far-famed for its sadness, Eugene Field thus begins his lay of Providence, R. I., and the indiscriminating disaster which attends the trial of poor plays on the figurative dog. His ballad is rather pathetic than sentimental. It is a cry of agony, not the muted breathing of a heart suffused with love's fervid sweetness. But it may not be inappropriate to quote from it in these columns with reference to Washington's fast-growing reputation as a first-night town.

The list of good plays given their first presentation here is distinctly notable. The dozen which have failed need not be mentioned. But it is worth while to consider "Aristocracy," with its extended run and pronounced success; "The Little Minister," wherein Miss Adams began her career as a star; "The Girl I Left Behind Me," one of the most successful of high-class melodramas; the Ward and James production of "Julius Caesar"; "The Children of the Ghetto," one of the most meritorious dramatic compositions of the past fifty years; "Du Barry," Mrs. Carter's stepping-stone to wealth and fortune; "The Christian," with its incidental "discovery" of Edward Morgan; "Richard Savage," which marked the beginning of Henry Miller's career as an independent star; "Her Majesty," one of William Brady's few unsuccessful ventures; and in this season alone, "The Eternal City," "St. Ann," "A Rose O' Plymouth Town," "The Darling of the Gods," and, finally, "Mice and Men." Already Charles Frohman has announced through the columns of The Times that Miss Adams will open her new season, after having rested an entire year, in a new play to be given its first presentation here.

These are only the strongest links in a long chain. Yet they make a long list. Further, David Belasco--who seems to be one of the most productive playwrights and managers now alive--regards Washington with so much favor that all his new plays are to inaugurate their business life here. Mr. Frohman expresses much the same intention. William A. Brady, Wacziargues & Kemper, the Liebers, and many other managers seem inclined to do likewise. Washington is undoubtedly the foremost first-night center in America.

In New York city this would be regarded as a questionable distinction. "Frohman and the others are merely trying their plays on the dog," says the characteristic New Yorker. "You people down in Washington applaud any old thing, then your critics make some reference to 'prolonged and enthusiastic hand-clapping,' and the management uses the notices in its advertisements. And, of course, some changes have to be made and the managers like to get them out of the way before the New York season. Washington has supplanted Providence, New Haven, Hartford, and Albany, that's all. New York gets the real benefit."

Washington will do well to give this view careful consideration. There seems to be much to support it. It is undeniable that Washington first-night audiences do applaud rather freely; that nearly every first-night criticism does refer to "prolonged and enthusiastic hand-clapping," that these notices do get on the billboards; that changes are almost invariably made in the course of the first week, and that the cities visited subsequently do reap the benefit.

Granting all that, however--admitting that first-night productions discredit the judgment and experience of the community which views them--New York will bear barking if anything can drown the noise of its elevated roads. That metropolis passes judgment on at least as many new plays as Washington. All melodramas open there. Almost without exception it is the birthplace of all so-called "musical comedies." Clyde Fitch launches his plays--unsavory, shallow, and artificial as most of them are--not only in New York, but in one or two particular theaters there. One of them, which was by some chance first produced in Washington, was so justly criticized and so significantly neglected that it had to be practically remade and then failed, only a week or so ago. But, most important of all, the "problem plays"--works like the beautiful and uplifting "Sapho," the manly and noble-minded "Gay Lord Quesada," and "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray"--nearly all ask for a New York verdict before they dare the decency and brave the morals of theatergoers elsewhere. If there is any discredit in the distinction, Washington shares it with New York, and New York has the proud privilege of giving its approval to the least artistic and most depraved plays shown in American theaters.

However, most of this discredit is imaginative. Excepting that it give support to immorality and impurity, any community of theater patrons can find just satisfaction in its distinction as a place of first productions.

Washingtonians do not applaud "any old thing." Poor Miss Dupree, who made her bow locally several months ago, will vouch for that. Her play was not bad, its substance was delectable, and the acting was good. Yet the weakness of

"A Rose O' Plymouth Town" was detected and the play condemned. This happens to be the most recent instance of that sort, but there are many others. Nearly always changes must be made, it is true. But the greater number of such changes are detected by the audience, not by the management. There is no manager in the country who would oppose his judgment as to the success of a comedy or the strength of a tragedy against that of two actual trials in a city like this. Such changes as are made are nearly always made on the recommendation of the first-night audiences.

The judgment of a New York audience in such respects has long been mistrusted. Its theatergoers are jaded. As has already been indicated, it cares only for cheap musical comedy, worthless melodrama, or disgusting "problem plays." If it grants favor to anything else it is because a new class of theatergoers fills the seats. What manager, then, would undertake to alter a good, clean, healthful play like "Mice and Men" on the verdict of a New York audience? Not Mrs. Fiske--she produced "Mary of Magdala" in Chicago. Not Henry Miller and Richard Harding Davis--they produced "The Taming of Helen" in Rochester. Not David Belasco--all his plays are to be first shown on the Washington stage. Not Charles Frohman or his brother Daniel--they seem to prefer any other city in the Union.

In contrast, nothing could inspire more confidence than the first-night trials in Washington in the past ten years. No single play has drawn well in the Capital which has failed when on tour. Every work, good or bad intrinsically, which has been heartily supported here, has been heartily supported in every other city, not excepting New York. It is unnecessary to cite instances, but one or two may lend emphasis to this statement. "The Cuckoo" suffered from severe frost at the Lafayette. In spite of that warning its managers attempted to tour the country with it; and in less than a month it was practically dead. "Her Majesty" played to half houses in the Columbia, and during the next two months to half houses in a dozen other cities. "The Children of the Ghetto" was a pronounced success here. It failed outright in London. But it has proved one of the most successful American investments the Lieber Company has ever made.

Indeed, little else could be expected. Good plays are designed for the more intelligent of theatergoers. Few questionable plays are given first-night production in Washington. The composition of the local audience challenges comparison with that of the most highly priced and socially exalted playhouses anywhere else, London, Paris, or New York. Probably no other city in the world has so many highly educated residents of the middle class, and so few residents who are poor or uneducated. An audience at all representative of such a population will invariably give its approval to whatever is finished, artistic, reasonable, strong, and pure. A play without those attributes must invariably fail. Washington theatergoers are not jaded. Their minds are open to sincere pleasure, unaffected absorption, and healthful enthusiasm. They are not fit to pass upon such compositions as "The Belle of New York," and they ought to thank Providence for it.

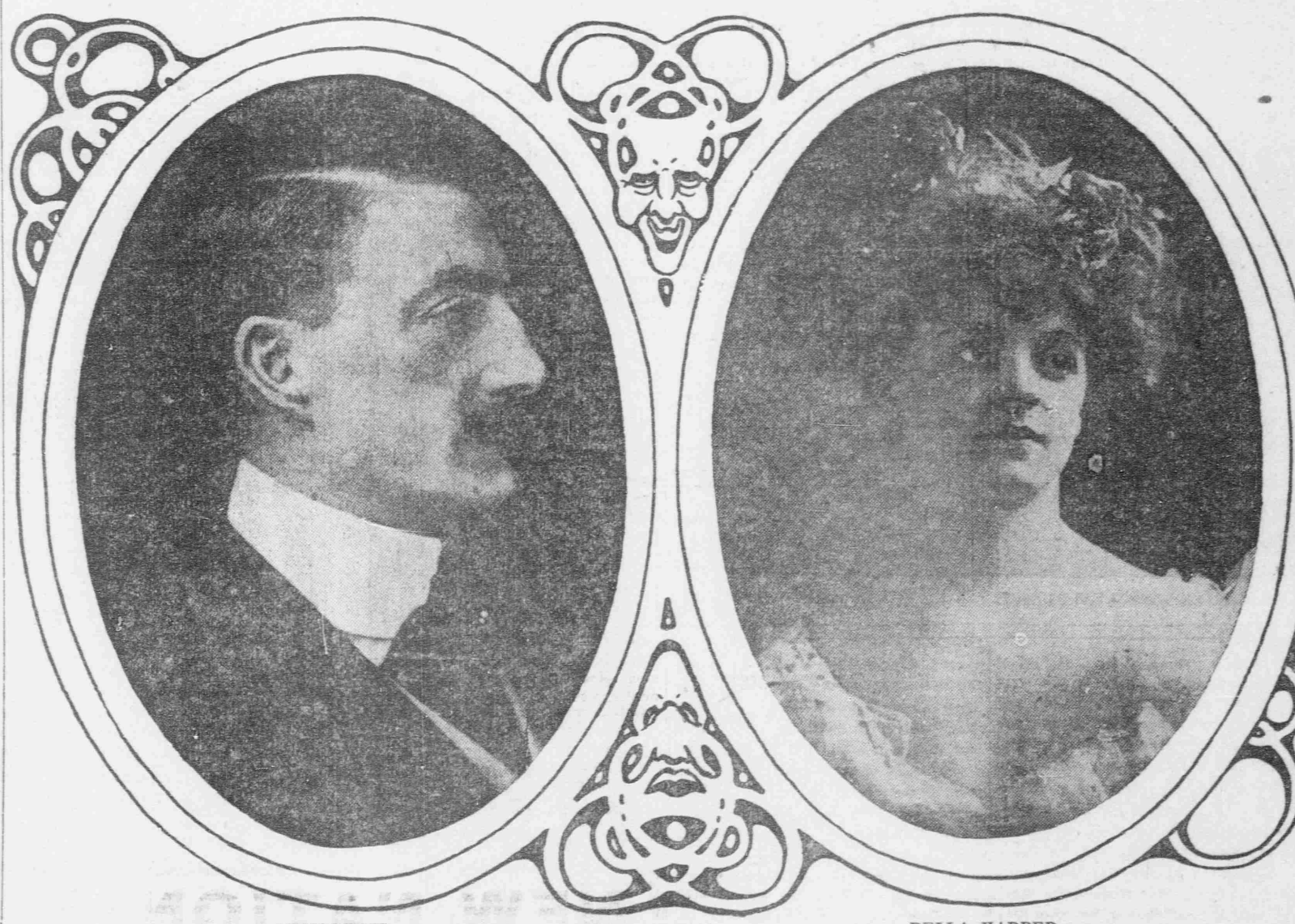
With such a view spread before the eye, life in this first-night city is not a dreary prospect. Whatever is artistic and worthy finds Washington as advanced as any other community in the country. It is "jazz" only in those things which pander to the depraved taste of New York--a decoration to be worn proudly these days--and it is sufficient advanced along the lines of true art to appreciate actors like Annie Russell, and Otis Skinner and plays like "Mice and Men," and "Francesca Da Rimini." American managers have finally discovered this, like barometers of slow action, and the people of the Capital are now reaping the benefit of their own discrimination. Washington is no dramatic dog. Its estimate of a new play is as good a guide as the actor, playwright, and manager can obtain in America.

Past and Future.

The sunshine of Miss Russell's acting and the advent of a new play--interesting, diverting, and decidedly affecting, although not overstrong--made the past week notable in the local dramatic season.

The actress acquitted herself with much credit. As was to be expected her enunciation was restrained, tasteful, refined, scholarly, unaffected, and deliciously natural. This last attribute exhibited itself most forcibly, perhaps, in that scene of "Mice and Men" which brings her on the stage barefoot with her shoes and stockings on her arm. It is to be hoped, however, that the criticism of other cities may be as moderate in advertising the episode as were the critical writers of Washington. So wholesome a play should not be given a false character.

Otherwise Miss Russell and Mr. Frohman must anticipate fair sailing. The charm of the actress would carry the play, but the play has interest enough to carry itself. In the hands of such a company, moreover, it seems sure to do well. Mr. Mason has added materially to his reputation. Mr. Johnson acted with rare force and skill. Old Mrs. Gilbert still further established herself as the most affectionately regarded actress on the English-speaking stage. Star, support, and play are alike



JOHN DREW.

BELLA HARPER.

fine. May all three prosper through the New Year as they deserve! "Sky Farm" furnishes the text for a long sermon, if there were space to preach it. Pastoral plays are no longer a fetch. Like the worn-out factory drama, the play located in the Latin Quarter in Paris and the "rip-roaring musical farce" it now stands on the universal base of general dramatic requirements. It is to be urged against "Sky Farm," also, that its tone was decidedly questionable.

"The Chaperons" held crowded receptions at the Lafayette, as the performance deserved. It is no more offensive and quite as meritorious as any other composition of the same class exhibited here since "The Passing Show." The burlesque football players and a strong supporting bill crowded Chase's. "At Cripple Creek" did well. Both the other theaters pegged along oblivious of "Mice and Men," the pastoral drama, musical comedy, Indian football and melodrama. 'Twas ever thus and always will be.

John Drew's appearance will evoke his deserved and unvarying following. "A Chinese Honeymoon" will contribute songs, dances, and pretty girls with a somewhat enlivening dialogue at the Columbia. According to various reports the book, at least in Washington, will be entirely inoffensive, which makes the prospect of its local appearance rather pleasing than otherwise. In any event it is almost certain to do a good business. Chase's presents Mme. Mantelli, of the Metropolitan Grand Opera Company, an unusually good attraction for an unusually good theater. Hagenbeck's animals stop at the Lafayette en route for the St. Louis World's Fair. "The Flaming Arrow" at the Academy is announced as one of the best melodramas included in the season's bookings for that excellently managed playhouse. The Empire and the Lyceum present characteristic bills.

Creator Concert Tonight.

Creator and his band will be seen at a single concert at the National Theater tonight, and will render the following selections: March, "Tannhauser".....Wagner; Overture, "Zampa".....Herold; Minuet.....Paderewski; Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 2.....Liszt; March, "American Navy".....Grieg; Organ Overture.....Battiste; Soprano solo, from "Huguenots".....Meyerbeer.

Mme. Barill. Overture, "Tannhauser".....Wagner.

John Drew at the National.

John Drew's present season's success, "The Mummy and the Humming Bird," will be seen in this city at the National Theater. The only matinee during the week's engagement will be given Saturday. It is said to be the most satisfactory play he has had in his entire career. Not one of his previous roles, not even Lord Clive, in "The Bauble Shop," is said to have pleased his fashionable audiences more than his Lord Lumley, in "The Mummy and the Humming Bird." The play is by Isaac Henderson. The character of the titled scientist, who is given a lesson in the demands of love by a handsome invader of his home circle, fits every phase of Mr. Drew's art. The whole play is admirably acted, the entire company meeting the requirements of the author. Prominent among Mr. Drew's players are Margaret Dale, Guy Standing, Lionel Barrymore, Marie Derickson, Lewis Baker, Reginald Carrington, Robert Schable, David Henderson, and Constance Bell. The story opens in London, in the home of Lord Lumley, and is concluded in Paris, at the Hotel de Londres. At the beginning of the play, "the mummy" is in his laboratory. Outside the door are his wife, her niece, and her sweetheart, who are trying to awaken him to the fact that it is dinner time, and that they must start for the Carlton Hotel to dine, in honor of Signor D'Orelli, "the humming bird" villain. After many entreaties, Lumley enters and declares himself too busy to bother about eating. His wife, without directly stating the fact, tries to remind him that

it is her birthday. He had completely forgotten it, and she is too proud to make a positive assertion. D'Orelli, of course, has remembered it, and has brought her the first edition of his new book, with a photograph and signature. As a result, the party goes off to dine without the busy scientist, who continues his labors until he is disturbed by a barrel organ grinder beneath his window. He sends for the unfortunate, gives him a gold coin, and out of curiosity, invites him to take a bite with him. The organ grinder cannot speak a word of English; but by signs tells Lord Lumley of the breaking up of his home by a fellow-countryman. He describes the man, making it prominent that one of his prominent characteristics is a cynical laugh. Lord Lumley at once suspects D'Orelli, hires the organ grinder, Giuseppe by name, as his valet, and in the course of time the latter gets a good look at "the humming bird."

He has found his man; but does not act hastily. During the action of the play, D'Orelli pays violent attentions to Lady Lumley, and induces her to visit his apartments, with the intention of eloping. By a clever pretext Lord Lumley gets his wife out without D'Orelli's knowledge, and saves her from dishonor and disgrace. A reconciliation is effected between husband and wife, and D'Orelli is left to the not too tender mercies of the revengeful Giuseppe.

Columbia--"A Chinese Honeymoon."

The attraction at the Columbia Theater this week will be "A Chinese Honeymoon."

Among the many musical comedies produced in recent years it is said none has earned greater popularity than this English work. In London, nearly two years ago, it began a career of prosperity which still continues. The piece was received with equal favor when presented in the English provinces, and critical and popular verdicts passed upon it in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, the only American cities in which it has been seen so far, sustained the foreign opinions. The success which it has made at the New York Casino is so pronounced that in order to comply with an agreement made with out-of-town managers, Messrs. Shubert and Nixon & Zimmerman have found it necessary to organize another company to take the road. The second organization is said to be as strong as the one now playing in New York, and includes John E. Henshaw, Belle Harper, formerly prima donna of the Bostonians; Toby Claude, the diminutive comedienne whose impersonation of Fifi Priot in "The Belle of New York" is a pleasant memory; Ida Hawley, formerly prima donna of "The Burgomaster" and "The Toreador"; May Ten Broeck, the eccentric comedienne; Charles H. Prince, H. W. Clarke, Florence Knight, Edwin Clark, and others.

Mantelli at Chase's.

Mme. Eugenia Mantelli, a leading mezzo soprano grand opera singer, who was recently a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company, will be the extraordinary feature of the Chase program this week. Gathered around her and forming a program of superior quality are Valerie Bergere and company, Les Delbos, the Quigley Brothers, Stuart Barnes, the Four Huntings, the Great Steuber, and the American Vitaphone motion pictures, showing twelve tableaux from Dickens' famous story, "Scrooge, or Marley's Ghost." Mme. Mantelli won admiration here at a single performance by the Mascagni Opera Company, in October last, at which she sang the role of Lola, in "Cavalleria," and Zanetto, in the opera of the same name. She manifested a splendid contralto voice, full of flexibility and perfectly finished, united to an ability as an actress rare among grand opera singers.

At Chase's she will perform selections from her favorite roles. These she will give in the same costumes that were worn by her in the Metropolitan Opera Company and Mascagni productions. Valerie Bergere was selected by David Belasco to create the title role in John Luther Long's picturesque little Japanese drama, "Madam Butterfly." Her success

in the part is a matter of theatrical history and is yet fresh in the minds of the public. In "Billie's First Love," the little comedienne by Grace Griswold, which, with a competent supporting company, she will present next week, Miss Bergere runs the entire gamut of her genius.



EUGENIA MANTELLI.

The motion pictures will be of unusual interest. The usual Chase scale of 25 cents for reserved seats at matinees and 25 and 50 cents at night performances will not be increased because of the appearance of Mme. Mantelli. The large advance sale manifests a keen degree of public interest in the forthcoming bill.

Hagenbeck at the Lafayette.

After an absence of eight years the Carl Hagenbeck Trained Animal Company will visit Washington again this week, giving twelve performances at the Lafayette Opera House. Over one hundred and fifty birds and animals of different kinds will take part. The principal feature is a mixed group consisting of two lions, three tigers, two pumas, two leopards, two polar bears, five Stuart hounds, and the much-talked-of Hagenbeck hybrid. This curious animal is a cross between a lion and a tiger, the first one ever brought to this country. It has the general appearance of the lion but the markings of a tiger. There are said to be only two other beasts of this description in the world, one being in the possession of the London Zoological Society, and the other in the Hagenbeck depot in Hamburg.

John Dudak and his nine polar bears comprise another novelty, this being the only time on record that these animals have been used for scenic purposes. All are well trained, and in spite of their traditional stupidity and nasty temper do the bidding of Herr Dudak as though they really enjoyed the work. There is an exciting wrestling match at the conclusion of this number, but before the bears leave the stage they are fed raw meat from the naked hands of the trainer, seemingly a very hazardous performance. The Ricebony brothers and their educated horses and dogs are expected to come in for a good share of attention. One of the horses is called "the good-night horse," from the fact that he comes into the ring fully dressed in coat, cap, trousers, and boots, and by the dexterous use of his teeth disrobes completely. Then he blows out the candle and goes to bed, carefully pulling the clothes up over him. Charles Judge Alaska introduces a troupe of trained seals and sea lions, many of the tricks being entirely new. Vasile Popescu has taught the tiger and elephant to forget their long-standing jungle feud and perform a variety of feats. The tiger rides on the back of the elephant and jumps to and fro through hoops of fire. "Clown" Schubert has the "goat congress of all nations," a unique and amusing contribution. Kerslake comes next with his funny pig circus, an act intended especially for the children. Anna Gilke's bird show brings to view a variety of beautiful macaws from Australia and several rose and sulphur-crested cockatoos from South America. The eight acts enumerated follow each other in rapid succession, making a two and three-quarter

hours performance. A matinee will be given every day during this engagement.

"The Flaming Arrow" at the Academy.

Go-Won-Go-Mohawk, the American Indian actress, will begin a week's engagement at the Academy of Music tomorrow evening in Lincoln J. Carter's drama of Western border life, "The Flaming Arrow." Miss Mohawk enacts the role of a young chief of the Arapahoe tribe known as "White Eagle," who, at the opening of the play, has recently returned to his tribal home in the Far West from an Eastern college.

He dons the moccasins and costume of his ancestors, and is again, to outward appearance, a thorough savage. The part is said to provide Miss Mohawk with ample opportunity to display her histrionic ability. In the company are sixteen full-blooded braves, specially selected from the Sioux of the Pine Ridge Agency. The head and leather dressing of the braves is said to be elaborate and correct. Many of the bead dresses, hunting shirts and moccasins are striking examples of the Indian art in this line. The council fire and ghost dance were staged by Chief Red Flash, an old Indian noted for many years on the plains as a close friend and companion of the notorious Sitting Bull.

The scenic investiture is said to be especially fine, the locale of the play offering excellent inducements for good mechanical effects.

"Butterflies" at the Empire.

The Butterfly Extravaganza Company, an organization of well-known reputé among the burlesque aggregations on tour this season, will be the offering at the Empire Theater next week. It is a well equipped company in all respects and has among its members several vaudeville artists who are well and favorably known here. The list is headed by Belle Stewart, the comedienne, who is assisted by Dave Fitzgibbons, well known as a leading pianist of the continuous vaudeville houses. This is Mr. Fitzgibbons' first season in vaudeville. The Meredith Sisters, vocalists; Shaeffer, Stillwell and Shaeffer, musical trio; Markey and Stewart, and Russell and Locke are also on the bill. Two burlesques will be given, in which twenty-five comedy girls assist. As an extra attraction the management has engaged Frank Huseman, the well known local champion wrestler, who will meet all comers at every performance and will forfeit \$25 to anyone his weight whom he fails to throw in fifteen minutes.

Rentz-Santley Company at the Lyceum.

Manager Abe Leavitt's Rentz-Santley Company will be the attraction at the Lyceum Theater this week. The company will introduce the farcical burlesque, "A Trip to the Coronation," and a laughable satire on David Warfield's dramatic success, "The Auctioneer," entitled "He Hocks in Here." The organization has a reputation for novel features which are seldom seen with any similar attraction, and the introduction of ensemble numbers such as "The Ping-Pong Girls and Boys," "The Bachelor Belles," "The Bal-Masque," "The Physical Culture Cops," and "Blooming Lize."

Announcements, Formal and Informal

Francis Wilson will appear at the National January 12 in Nixon & Zimmerman's production of "The Toreador," one of the most delightful of the London Gaiety successes. It gives Mr. Wilson one of the best opportunities he has had since his great hit in "Erminie."

"Way Down East" at the Columbia.

With an entire new equipment and the original cast "Way Down East" will be seen at the Columbia Theater next week. The popularity of this celebrated rural play does not seem to wane.

Vaudeville Anniversaries.

The fourth anniversary of the inauguration of polite vaudeville in Washington will be celebrated at the beautiful Ave-

nue play house next week, beginning January 12. In honor of the occasion Mr. Chase will present a polite vaudeville program, on which he has been at work for months.

Ward and Vokes' Local Appearance.

Ward and Vokes will appear in "The Head Waiters" at the Lafayette Opera House throughout the week beginning Monday, January 12, with matinees on Wednesday and Saturday.

A Fight For Millions.

The attraction at the Academy next week will be the melodrama "A Fight for Millions."

More Trying Than Tragedy.

Miss Russell Believes Comedy is the More Exacting.

Annie Russell, exponent of all that is sweet, gentle, and ennobling in stage presentations, returned to Washington last week and gave the initial production in America of Mrs. Ryley's "Mice and Men." In scanning the list of American and even foreign stars there is no personality more charming and no individual art more finely developed than that of Miss Russell. With a girlishness so refreshing that one feels as if one had been on a delightful vacation after viewing her performance, Miss Russell has launched play after play into popular favor--many of them offerings which might not have been counted successes but for the delightful and artistic work of the star.

The qualities which appeal so strongly to Miss Russell's audiences are not limited to her stage appearances. The present generation is fast becoming accustomed to mediocre productions, and is learning to tolerate presentations which would have shamed old-time players in the barnstorming days. These days, when a player has his name in big type, when he has acquired rank in the coterie of stars, it matters very little to him, apparently, with what caliber of players he surrounds himself so that he himself shines resplendent.

Believes in Strong Companies.

Miss Russell is one of the few exceptions to this rule. Her support is of as much importance to her as the play she is presenting. She has faith in the public's loyalty and a beautiful consideration for its nerves. She does not insult intelligence by asking her patrons to view a performance by incompetent actors, but insists on a company of educated, refined, and thoroughly capable players. Experience, as well as sound sense, has proved Miss Russell's wisdom in this regard.

On viewing a characteristic Russell performance the question suggests itself whether the same artistic effort is required in portraying a character of comedy as in portraying one drawn on more serious lines. But according to Miss Russell, and certainly there can be no better authority on the subject, the effort required in depicting a comedy role is even greater than that called for by an emotional part. Yesterday afternoon, transformed into Peggy of the founding asylum by the aid of a somber-hued gown, white cap, and apron, the actress sat in her dressing room at the National Theater, waiting to go on, when she made the foregoing assertion.

Comedy vs. "Serious" Drama.

"It is my earnest belief," said the actress, "that more thought, more concentration, and a closer application are necessary in the study of a comedy role than in portraying the deeper emotions which come in real life. It is easy to be tragic--easy to depict the sorrows and deeper feelings of humanity than to show nature's brighter side. I can say this confidently, because in my own life I have had enough pathos, through illness and the hundred and one other things which come to all of us, to make it easier for me to realize the seriousness of life rather than its sunshine."

"The subtlety in a good, refined comedy role is limitless. There are depths to be dug and heights to be reached in working it out, and when this is accomplished the picture is strong, beautiful, and complete. To me there is nothing so appalling as a comedy role badly played. But again, there is nothing more clear cut or more satisfying than one which has been given the diligent research it deserves. Nature, we all know, is the most exquisite thing in life, and when one is able to portray it, certainly the results cannot be other than beautiful. Look at Nat Goodwin. What do we love him for? His wonderful portrayal of real, genuine, natural humor."

"One must be natural to be a success in comedy. One false note will spoil the whole thing, and make a cheap imitation of what could be the rarest gem in stage characterizations. The French school, to which we are inclined to look with confidence, is leaning more to comedy each year. Its authors, its players, and its theaters countenance 'the lighter vein' almost to the exclusion of serious drama."

The Value of Pure Plays.

"I am perfectly happy in my present play, for it gives me full rein, and I feel as if I can breathe again. I have had so many parts in which my fancy was restricted that I am delighted to get hold of 'Peggy.' Just because a part looks pretty and easy, and all that, is no reason why people should think that its study is a mere bagatelle. It is anything but that. I have studied 'Peggy' with more energy, not unminged with a great deal of pleasure, than I have studied many other roles. My earlier parts, each in its turn, have taught me in their own way what a wonderful thing nature is. The more you study it, the deeper and the higher you go, and the further you may continue to go."

Miss Russell does not take to herself all, or in fact any great part, of the credit due for her success in comedy. She thinks a good comedy part may be successfully played by any capable actor, but qualifies her statement in that the degree of success attending a portrayal depends wholly on the amount of effort put forth by that actor.

Miss Russell is a thorough artist,